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RESTRICTION OF IMMIGRATION ⁰_{C4}

HEARINGS

BEFORE

U. S. Congress, House.
**THE COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION
AND NATURALIZATION**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SIXTY-FOURTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

H. R. 558

THURSDAY, JANUARY 20, 1916

AND,

FRIDAY, JANUARY 21, 1916

STATEMENTS OF

J. O. CARR

MISS HAVILAND H. LUND



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WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
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COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

SIXTY-FOURTH CONGRESS.

JOHN L. BURNETT, Alabama, *Chairman*.

ADOLPH J. SABATH, Illinois.

JOHN A. M. ADAIR, Indiana.

JAMES L. SLAYDEN, Texas.

JOHN E. RAKER, California.

JOHN A. KEY, Ohio.

JOSEPH V. FLYNN, New York.

RILEY J. WILSON, Louisiana.

GEORGE E. HOOD, North Carolina.

EVERIS A. HAYES, California.

ALBERT JOHNSON, Washington.

CALEB POWERS, Kentucky.

JACOB E. MEEKER, Missouri.

ISAAC SIEGEL, New York.

THOMAS D. SCHALL, Minnesota.

P. W. BURNETT, *Clerk*.

RESTRICTION OF IMMIGRATION.

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, D. C.

Mr. SABATH. Mr. Chairman, I will now ask that we hear from a gentleman who does not represent New York, nor Baltimore, nor any of the Western or Northern States, but he represents one of the Southern States. I call upon Mr. J. O. Carr, representing the Chamber of Commerce of Wilmington, N. C. We will allow you five minutes, Mr. Carr.

Mr. CARR. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF MR. J. O. CARR.

Mr. CARR. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, this will simply give me an opportunity to state that I have come here at the request of the Chamber of Commerce of Wilmington, N. C., many members of which are interested in a plan for the development of the agricultural sections of the country adjoining Wilmington. The situation there is this: For 50 miles around Wilmington, which is a little seaport town down in North Carolina, with about 30,000 inhabitants, is, you might say, a barren waste of good land. In other words, we have a large territory there the only salvation of which is to develop it by farmers or with farmers. The labor in that section of the country has, of course, been the negro labor. The native labor is not sufficient in quantity to develop the country. The result is that the negro laborer, while he is valuable in certain respects, and will continue to be valuable, as a developer, he has not been trained to that point where he can be relied upon to take care of a farm and buy it and make the country richer thereby. Now, these gentlemen have invested possibly a million dollars in lands, with the idea of bringing the peasant farmer, many of whom may not be able to read or write, or many of whom may be able to read or write. We, of course, would prefer the educated to the uneducated, but we want the farmers there for the purpose of developing the country, we have got to get them, whether they can read or write or not, if you will let us do it. Now, the experiment is under way. We have about 200 families there—some of them are Italians, some of them are Hollanders, some of them, I think, are German, some of them are Greeks—but we have been unable to get them in such quantities, of the educated class, as is necessary for the permanent and effective development of that country.

Now, this investment, which is primarily—of course every man who puts money into an enterprise expects to have it returned—but the primary object of this development is to make that an agricul-

tural country which will be a feeder for Wilmington; that has been the scheme for 10 years, and we want to ask this committee, in forming this legislation, not to prohibit the man who is coming here to buy a farm to develop the agricultural resources of our community—not to prohibit him on account of the literacy test, and we ask you not to make the law so that we can not go off and seek these immigrants and bring them here for the purpose of developing that land, because we know that without a hope of getting the foreigner—and, by that, we do not want to be understood as wanting the undesirables any more than this committee does—we want the foreigner, even if he can not read and write; we want the foreigner who is an agricultural laborer; who is not coming there for his wages alone, but who is coming there for the purpose of buying a farm, and making his future home there, and planting himself there as a permanent citizen. Now, my time is up, and I simply want to request the committee that you do not prohibit us from having that class, and I think this is a typical illustration of what will come throughout the whole South. The resources of the South—agricultural resources—have not been scratched.

Mr. JOHNSON. Is it not true that the State of North Carolina had a fund to encourage immigration?

Mr. CARR. Yes. There are about 200 families now that have been there from, I would say, 10 years down to the last three years, and the experiment is a remarkable success. I have never heard—I do not pretend to say there is not any; it would be remarkable if there were not any friction, but I have not heard—and I am familiar with the country communities where they are located—and I have not heard of the slightest friction or antagonism or prejudice on the part of the natives to these people, because they realize that they are doing something they can not do themselves, because of the lack in the quantity of the class of people they would like to have.

The CHAIRMAN. How long have they been there?

Mr. CARR. The Italian settlement, I think, possibly, Mr. Chairman, has been there for eight years.

The CHAIRMAN. They are northern Italians entirely?

Mr. CARR. The Italians were brought, I understand, from the northern mountain section of Italy.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Mr. CARR. Now, the Holland settlement is about 2 years old.

The CHAIRMAN. Is it not true that your labor organizations there, and that your farmers' organizations, and that your patriotic organizations are almost a unit in favor of the bill?

Mr. CARR. I think it is true in the sense that the local organizations follow the head organizations or the national organizations.

The CHAIRMAN. You have not had any referendum? The gentleman from New York was talking about referendum. You have not taken the individual opinions of all the people in the town or in the county, have you?

Mr. CARR. No, sir; but I belong personally to the Junior Order of United American Mechanics, and I am a farmer myself—one of those farmers who manage to make a little money practicing law and lose it on the farm.

The CHAIRMAN. What business are you in?

Mr. CARR. Practicing law.

The CHAIRMAN. Who are these colonizers? Are not the railroad companies there engaged in the colonization business?

Mr. CARR. I do not know whether they are or not, but I am in hope they are.

The CHAIRMAN. Is it your opinion that they are responsible for it?

Mr. CARR. I think perhaps they are, but I have absolutely no information to that effect. I know our business element is a unit in the opinion that this will develop that community.

Mr. KEY. Did not your State formerly appropriate a certain amount of money to bring immigrants into your State?

Mr. CARR. There was some small appropriation, but I do not think it ever amounted to anything.

Mr. KEY. The State discontinued that appropriation?

Mr. CARR. Yes. I never heard of it being put into effect, although a few years ago there was some provision of the law with reference to it, but I do not think anything was ever done about it.

Mr. SABATH. The time of the gentleman is up. I have no objection to questions being asked him, and in fact I wish the time could be given to them, and I would appreciate it very much if you would give it to them.

The CHAIRMAN. Of course, we can not give any more time to your side.

Mr. JOHNSON. I want to ask if any money is needed by these proposed settlers to go on to these lands?

Mr. CARR. I would think that if those lands are settled according to the plan which has been developed, it would be necessary to bring them here in numbers and to pay their expenses, because I do not think that a circular circulated in a foreign land will bring one family here.

Mr. SABATH. But if they would come of their own free will and accord, without your spending any money, and would be willing to settle there, you would be pleased to have them?

Mr. CARR. That is our attitude exactly.

Mr. JOHNSON. Is there money available for their use?

Mr. CARR. That I do not know.

Mr. JOHNSON. Can you not find foreigners in the large cities to go there?

Mr. CARR. I do not think any plan of that kind is in existence, but we wish a cooperative plan by which they can solicit these foreigners in the foreign lands and bring them here.

The CHAIRMAN. I started several times to say I expected Mr. Morrison to conclude, but I have just received a letter from Senator Works that was really intended for Senator Smith, I understand, chairman of the Immigration Committee of the Senate, in which he requests Senator Smith to permit Miss Haviland H. Lund, of the Land League of New York, to address this committee, and I have agreed. I believe we have 1 hour and 35 minutes, and I have agreed to allow Miss Lund 5 minutes, and we will hear from her now.

STATEMENT OF MISS HAVILAND H. LUND, NEW YORK CITY.

Miss LUND. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, our chief interest, of course, in this literacy test is to know the capacity of the person for culture and education, and we all know that sometimes, and many times, those from the other side have not had the educational opportunities, yet have made good citizens. At the same time the necessity of restriction and finding some average by which we can base this test upon is before us.

I represent the National Forward-to-the-Land League, a federation of many organizations interested in the distribution of all of our people; there is no discrimination made for or against the immigrant, but this matter of distribution of the immigrant is certainly a very important one, and my suggestion to this committee is this:

Might it not be well, since we have these millions of acres of vacant land, to suggest that there be a receiving station in connection with the State agricultural colleges where the immigrants that pass the average moral and physical tests with which we are familiar could have a three-months' probationary period, where, under the direction of agricultural instructors, they are tested as to their agricultural fitness and their ability to go upon the land, and during that three months' time they should have classes in English and in the simple laws pertaining to citizenship in this country, general instruction as to procedure here, so that their fitness for citizenry might be determined, as would also their fitness and ambitions and aspirations to receive an education be determined by such a probationary period?

Now, gentlemen, that entails no expense to the State, because the labor of these people during that interim on the experimental farm would more than compensate for their maintenance. We do need people upon the land. I know you are going to say, "But how are these people going to be so financed that they can go upon the land?" Our organization is fortunate in being able to obtain colonization opportunities. Let me say that our organization does not buy or sell land. We conduct a bureau of information, and we are organized as a nonprofit-making association under State supervision, and we are connected with the public schools, the State universities, and the Commissioner of the Department of Education in Washington; but we do cooperate and bring about openings in colonization where model rural schools are installed, where an agricultural instructor is provided, and where groups of people of not less than 50 families can go with a very small capital. We have been fortunate enough to arrange that some of our largest capitalists are willing to finance these rural organization communities so that those with small capital, either Americans or immigrants, can go out in an organized community where the environment and the supervision and the agricultural education are provided, and where a very little capital will get them so started.

It seems to me that in conjunction with these openings in several States, which are coming up from time to time—there are six different States now ready to announce such openings, where very small capital will start them—that in conjunction with that that this receiving station in each State where there is an immigration port would be an advantage and would determine this literacy test very much better after 90 days' residence in the country under

those favorable conditions, than the literacy test upon entrance into this country. It seems to me that we get past that one snag which we are eternally brought up against. There are so many people who do not have the advantages of education and turn out all right when received. Then, on the other hand, we know many who have the education who are not the kind of people we want here now. And it does seem to me that it would make it much fairer here, gentlemen, if we could have this probationary period where it can be so arranged that it would cost the State nothing.

I have had the pleasure of talking about this to the deans of agricultural colleges and they think very favorably of it indeed, and are only too glad and willing to add that to their present abundant duties.

I thank you for this opportunity of making this suggestion to your chairman and this honorable committee.

Mr. RAKER. Would the lady give some idea of the plan she has outlined in the extension of her remarks, so it may go in the record here? Have you any general plan outlined on this?

Miss LUND. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. You may send it to the clerk of the committee, either to-morrow or the next day. We should be very glad to have it inserted.

Mr. RAKER. So we can have it printed, then we can all read your ideas on the subject.

Miss LUND. Yes. I thank you.

[Statement of Miss Lund.]

THE IMMEDIATE PROGRAM: TO BRING TOGETHER THE MAN, THE LAND, AND THE CAPITAL.

Owing to the alarming increase of restless and migratory farm tenantry, and the growing problems of city congestion and unemployment, together with the great world demand for agricultural and allied products, and because of the vast area of uncultivated acreage and the expected influx into America of European farmers on account of the great war now in progress, as well as the serious problem presented by the presence in our cities of vast numbers of immigrants glutting our labor market, who are often especially fitted for agricultural life, the following immediate program to bring together the man, the land, and the necessary money to finance small farm ownership is put forward. The committee on direction of this organization is composed of notable national welfare workers and well-known business men. Men in all States are hungry through lack of work. In all these States are vast tracts idle for lack of men to cultivate them. Yet the idle man is as incapable of finding his way to a use of the land as are the waste places of taking the initiative. Many now holding jobs would abandon them and go to farming if they could, thus making place for some man needing that job who prefers city life.

Solution of the problems of city congestion and unemployment lies largely in proper classification and direction.

FOUR ACTIVITIES NOW.

The National Forward-to-the-Land League has four distinct though interrelated activities as the beginning of its program: (1) Bureau of land and home welfare information; (2) colonization, embracing scientific direction and social organization; (3) rural credit; (4) markets.

BUREAU OF LAND AND HOME WELFARE INFORMATION.

While the United States Government and the several State governments are attempting to educate the rural population in the science and business of farming, there is no authoritative source of information concerning available land and its character—an omission that has made possible the land swindler and brought wreckage to the high hopes of thousands of honest home seekers.

It is to cover this deficiency that the National Forward-to-the-Land League has opened a bureau for supplying information that is absolutely trustworthy, all reports being vouched for by land experts who are accredited by the agricultural colleges of the several States. This central land information bureau is located at the Labor Temple, corner Fourteenth Street and Second Avenue, New York City. Charts, maps, soil surveys, and all data concerning markets, transportation, health, and welfare conditions which are of value to the individual or to any group of people desiring to locate upon the land will be furnished upon request.

The bureau is conducting an educational campaign, giving lectures among working people at churches, trade union halls, clubs, Young Men's Christian Associations, Salvation Army halls, and elsewhere.

It is organizing those interested in rural life into study groups. Cornell University, through its extension department, will conduct classes in agriculture and rural and household economics in the bureau of information, beginning July 6.

The bureau is circulating application cards through every possible channel throughout the United States in order to obtain knowledge of those wishing to go upon the land.

It will support the movement looking to the formation of rural credit banks and cooperative associations, and is urging upon philanthropists the wisdom of investment in these cooperative institutions which safely finance people of limited means, and at the same time furnish a return on the investment.

Having made this bureau the clearing house for national, State and local information concerning land and home welfare, and having eliminated all political, commercial and private self-interest, the bureau proceeds by two methods to bring the people and the land together.

First. It assembles groups of people and organizes them for study in agriculture, rural economics, cooperative credit, domestic science and utilitarian crafts.

Second. It enables the States and their commercial organizations desiring selected colonists to present through the bureau colonization propositions which are honest and properly financed. The bureau in turn can bring these facts, after they are investigated, to the attention of the groups which have been assembled.

The present method of selling land costs the landowner from 25 to 45 per cent. This is a heavy and permanent burden on the land, affecting both buyer and seller.

In the past, men with small capital could get free land. It is the same type of man who made our country what it is, who to-day, for lack of capital to buy land, is kept in the city. Credit is the only solution.

Individuals and communities are often willing to extend credit to the right kind of settler. How shall they know the right kind? By dealing with a selected and organized group from our bureau of information there is a known basis of credit.

COLONIZATION.

Commercial colonization in America has proven a criminal failure. Transportation companies annually remove thousands of homeseekers from one part of the country to another, and shortly these same migrants are ready to move on once more. Misrepresentations by honest but ignorant land agents as well as swindling promoters, and the failure of the older settlement to assimilate into its social organism the "new-comer," are among the causes of this steady movement of the land-hungry poor.

The National Forward-to-the-Land League has a thoroughly digested colonization plan. It proposes to begin upon the first natural points of attack in developing these plans, and then to permit the gradual unfolding of said plans as necessity demands. Its first office is to direct groups of people desiring to locate together or individuals to any properly accredited piece of land suitable in all particulars for their colonization. It will secure for the holding syndicate or corporation owning such land, scientific agricultural directors, social organizers and religious leaders.

It is too often the case that the prosperous American farmer abandons his land to tenants and seeks a town home because of the poor social, religious and educational opportunities offered by the isolated community. The social welfare plans of the National Forward-to-the-Land League aim to obviate this objection to country life by skillful platting of the land centering all the social activities in one group of buildings, and within easy reach of each family living in the colony.

THREE TYPES OF COLONY.

The National Forward-to-the-Land League, in its detailed plans (to be had gratis upon application to the secretary), proposes and is working to bring about the establishment of three types of rural colonies, whose membership should be composed of—

First. Selected would-be farmers, either native or immigrant, wishing to own land individually.

Second. The temporarily unemployed of the contiguous city, who are willing to work as laborers on land that is owned either by a holding syndicate of private capitalists or the municipality.

Third. The derelict who will work only under compulsion and police supervision, and who should be committed to farm colonies, the land being owned by the municipality or the State.

NOT ANTAGONISTIC TO LANDOWNERS.

The National Forward-to-the-Land League urges the landowner to concern himself with the permanent prosperity of the settler, and emphasizes the wisdom of reasonable rather than exorbitant profits in the sale of land. The land boom leaves the community ultimately prostrate. It is usually selling agencies rather than landowners that mulct the would-be homeseeker and paralyze the prosperity of the State. It is better to sell land at a price which enables the purchaser to make money thereon, and give the buyer the necessary instruction and environment so that he may become a contented, wealth-producing unit, than to waste his small capital through paying too high a price for land and by an ignorant expenditure of his working capital for equipment. When his money is gone, his farm bankrupt, you have him in the bread line or a drunkard or suicide from discouragement, and his family frequently becomes a burden on the State, or he moves on and reviles the locality where he failed.

If the home is the bulwark of the nation and agriculture its backbone, is it not time that home making should be protected? We have pure food and drug laws, why not "pure land" laws?

It is unanimously admitted that rural folk will not remain on the land when they are prosperous enough to move to the city, nor city folk go to it unless the social and educational life is what it should be. It is a business proposition to create a new type of rural life.

Colonization has been successful in several instances, but always there has been a religious or other uncommercial element within the organization as a cohesive factor. Therefore the National Forward-to-the-Land League has associated with it the various religious and welfare organizations and will group the people for colonization somewhat according to their race and religion. We urge upon these religious bodies the wisdom of incorporating a course of rural economics in theological seminaries and priests' colleges, and advise colony groups to take with them their priest, clergyman, or social leader.

CITY CLASSES IN AGRICULTURE.

By conducting evening classes in agriculture, rural, and household economics in our bureau of information we secure as students those who wish to leave the city. They gravitate naturally to us for this class work. Not only do they learn the essentials of their new vocation, but, what is far more important, they become acquainted with each other, and colony groups form automatically in the classroom. Our instructors thus have the opportunity of knowing personally each would-be colonist.

Each group recommended by us to a State seeking settlers will have a knowledge of organized community life. The small farmer operating individually can not compete with the "bonanza" farmer unless he cooperates with his neighbors and they treat their individual holdings as a unit for cultivation and marketing. The United States rural organization service and every agricultural college teaching rural economics is urging upon those already on the farm the necessity of such rural organization. In many countries bankrupt rural communities through such organizations have become prosperous. Three classes in New York City are under the direction of the extension department of Cornell University.

PERMANENT LAND EXHIBIT.

Every State and county recognizes the commercial value of properly exhibiting its resources. The commercial land show is short lived and its influence weakened because of its commercial character. We have invited all the States to install in New York City as a background to our bureau of information a permanent land exhibit. Several States have accepted and promised that their exhibits will be removed from the Panama Exposition to New York City. We hope within the year to have this exhibit properly assembled.

Moving pictures will be an important feature of the exposition, and the class work, as well as the bureau of information, will ultimately be conducted in this exposition building. The location for this building has not yet been selected.

RURAL CREDIT.

Three Presidents of the United States have appointed committees or commissions to study agricultural credit. Bills looking to the adoption in America of an adequate system of rural credit have been introduced into Congress.

The members of the rural credit committee in the National Forward-to-the-Land League are persons whose names are familiar to the public as specialists on this subject. This organization will undertake the task of financing the homeseeker.

SHORT-TERM CREDIT.

By organizing cooperative credit associations, with its membership made up of people from our study classes who wish to colonize, it is not difficult to convince a State wanting settlers or a philanthropist wanting to constructively help his country that when there are 50 families carefully selected wishing to live in a rural community, and they are organized into such an association, it is safe to loan money to the association for their productive necessities. These groups should be insured, so that, in case of death, the family and cooperative bank are protected. In every country except our own cooperative credit safely finances the poor man on the land. We could not say that it is safe to loan to these families individually, but it is possible, by means of this bureau, to finance groups of people for their transition from city to country at no risk to the capitalist.

In case the individual member fails to pay the community is amply secured, since all of his equipment is valuable to them. The only item not actually having collateral behind it is the food consumed, and it is impossible to conceive that any able-bodied person working his farm under the direction of an agricultural instructor would not improve his place by his labor sufficiently to offset this item.

There are in America numerous welfare organizations and philanthropic individuals who would like to use their money in such a way as to leave the beneficiary his self-respect and put him on a permanent self-help basis. It is a vital part of our program to make this safe and only way of using character as security understood by the layman.

LONG-TERM CREDIT.

We find that landowners are ready to extend ample credit on the land. We have received many offers for exceptionally long terms of payment, with very small first payment, and in some cases payment for two years is waived if purchasers have sufficient capital to equip their farms and sustain themselves until money is received from the crops. Legislation will eventually give us good land-bank laws. We can not expect land credit to be better until rural communities conserve their soil fertility and eliminate the criminal waste to be found on most American farms. Many farmers are thrifty and scientific, but the community as a whole is not. Loan companies rule accordingly. When land banks are organized, they will find that, through the avenues opened by the National Forward-to-the-Land League, they will have a friendly and supporting clientele, a volunteer agency that will enable them to readily dispose of their securities, thus bringing together the man, the land, and the money.

MARKETS.

Our country has been so prosperous that when food was cheap our benighted marketing system did not receive the consideration it needed. To-day the high cost of foodstuffs has caused the municipal, State, and Federal Governments to appoint commissions to study the problem. We are beginning to realize that food is a public utility, therefore the business methods, price, etc., are as much the public's business as transportation or light. Our classes in rural economics naturally include the study of markets, credit, etc.

THE IMMIGRANT.

The National Forward-to-the-Land League, being educational and affiliated with welfare and religious organizations, commands confidence. This is most important to the foreigner, who more than anyone else needs accurate and disinterested information. Unfortunately it is a fact that many of them distrust the Government. They more than anyone should be directed to the land. We have room for untold thousands of foreign farmers, and if they were properly distributed they would not compete with American labor.

The agricultural colleges of several States have advocated that immigrants who desire to go on the land have an opportunity to test their capacity and gain informa-

tion by working on demonstration farms for a suitable length of time. This plan has been tried. In California it has been suggested that this be done in connection with the demonstration farm of the State Agricultural College. This would protect the alien from exploitation and at the same time add to his knowledge of the ways and language of his new environment. Care, of course, must be taken to see that the transitional steps which lead him into his new experience shall not do violence to his native customs and habits. Otherwise colonization of the immigrant will be unsuccessful. To make the transition smooth is one of the aims of the league.

While it is true that the immigrant crowds into the cities there are many Americans there also, and as hungry for the land as the aliens. There is a lull now in the influx of immigration. Why not use this time in educating and directing those who are here?

REVENUES.

This organization will ultimately be self-supporting. We desire to open bureaus of information in all large cities. We charge a fee for land inspection. This charge is of an identical nature with the examination of titles, mining properties, etc. Whether we direct one or a thousand persons to a given tract profits us nothing, and we cooperate with any State or land company wanting settlers when they comply with the standard advocated by the league. (Full details given upon application to the secretary.)

We utilize the Government's bottled-up information. There is a law directing that information be furnished only upon request. Those most needing it do not know it is there and theirs for the asking.

Our information is given free.

Our classes are free.

Our land exhibit will be free when opened.

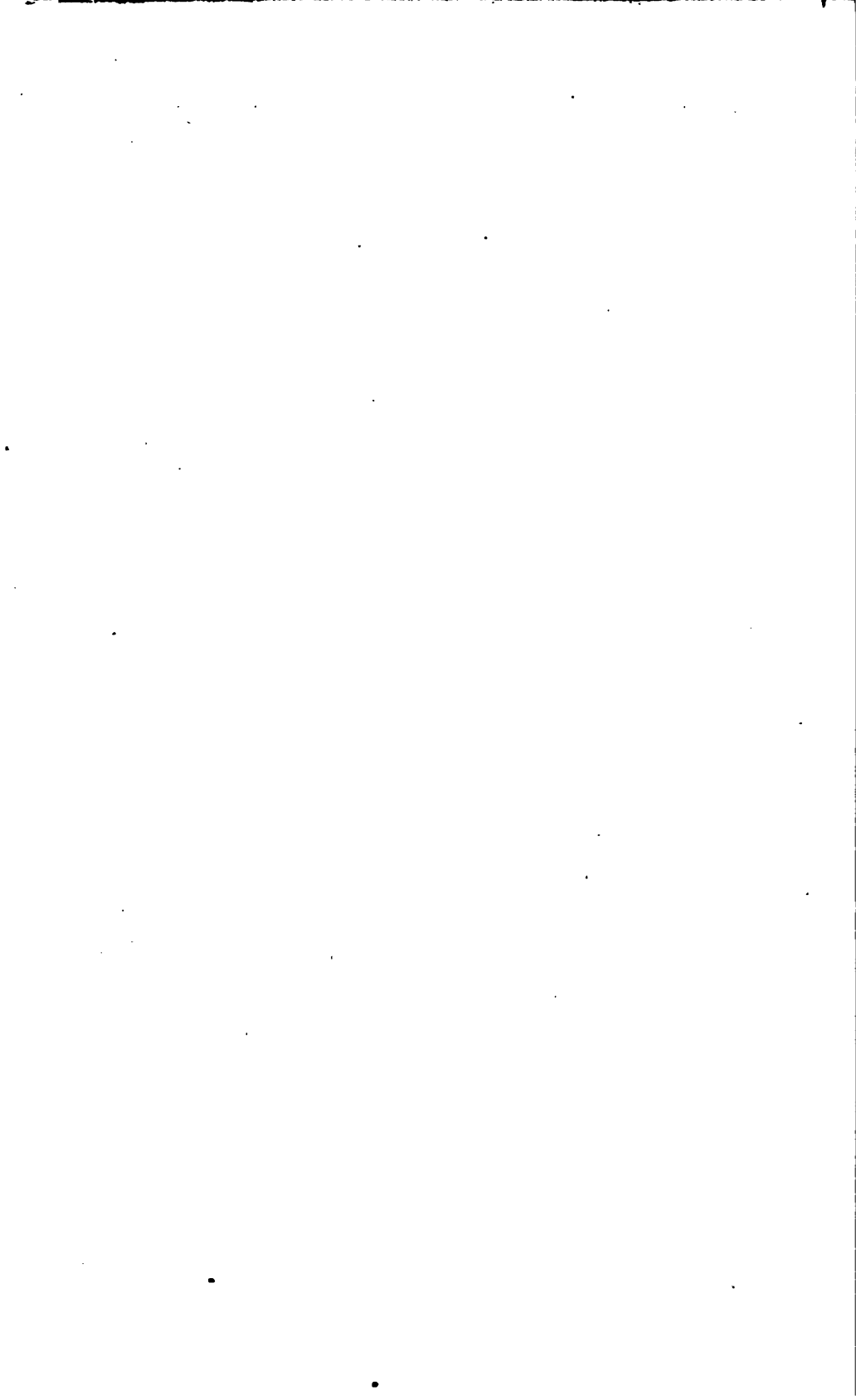
We are a coordinating body and as such have need of no great sum of money to do effective work.

Our expense for administration and the assembling of information and the land exhibit is nominal.

We must provide a place for the conduct of the bureau of information and the agricultural classes. Through the generosity of Dr. Jonathan C. Day, superintendent of labor temple, and an esteemed member of our committee of direction, we are able to begin this work rent free. Later, when the land exhibit is installed, the States making the exhibit will share pro rata the rent of the space used by themselves and the bureau.

The literature distributed is contributed by the several Government and private organizations seeking larger service and publicity. The State conducts the classes in agriculture, rural and household economics, because it believes that the extension department should be available to the city as well as the country man and woman.

Our expense is for the conduct of the lecture and publicity bureau, the clerical force necessary, and for an agricultural and colonization director for this bureau of information. At present we are conducting our work without this agricultural director and are depending upon the generosity of the State agricultural officials until the value of our work is recognized by the commercial organization directly benefited by the sane direction of people to farm homes.



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RESTRICTION OF IMMIGRATION

HEARINGS

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BEFORE

THE COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SIXTY-FOURTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

H. R. 558

FRIDAY, JANUARY 21, 1916

STATEMENTS OF

MR. LOUIS N. HAMMERLING

AND

HON. BOURKE COCKRAN

Of New York City



WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
1916

picked from the most efficient of all the white men throughout the world.

It is not an exaggeration to say that since the tide of immigration has set in toward these shores all Europe has become little more than an industrial training school to equip men and women for life in this country, only the best of whom are eligible for admission here, owing first to the conditions of our industrial life, and second, to immigration laws already enforced.

And, now, having shown, as I hope, the capital interest of our own country in maintaining the open door, I want to add a word as to the great part it has played in the progress of the world, and the serious consequences that must follow the closing of it. You recall the words of the gentleman from Chicago, himself a Pole, showing how his own countrymen languishing under the heel of oppressive despotism were sustained during many generations, through misery, want, and suffering, by the hope of escaping from those ills to this land of freedom, justice, and opportunity. To what he has said let me add that I myself can recall a state of society where a whole people languished in conditions infinitely worse than those described by this gentleman who spoke of Poland. For in the country of which I speak the lands were not appropriated by right of eminent domain; they were confiscated outright and bestowed without any compensation to the rightful owners upon aliens, foreigners, who never visited them, who held them solely for the revenues or rents that could be extorted from the wretched creatures who were suffered to occupy them. Worse still, the natives were not allowed to repurchase the lands of which they had been robbed, even if by any chance they had been able to secure the means.

In this condition—infinately worse than any savagery which the world has ever known—the only link between the wretched people and the alien who had power practically of life and death over them was the landlord's agent. His value was measured by the extent to which he could extort from the natives additional revenues or rents for his employer. As a natural result of such a system not only was industry rendered unprofitable, and therefore no longer cultivated with energy, but it became unpopular, actually discreditable. If a man by his own labor and the labor of his children succeeded in reclaiming waste or bog land—of which there is a great deal in the country—and made it arable, of some value, the agent immediately descended upon him and demanded that he pay in rent the full value of it; not the full value of the land as he obtained it, but its full value as he by his own labor had improved it. Worse still: One man having shown that the soil could be made to yield larger revenues by added industry, the rents were at once raised on all the other human beings in the neighborhood, which they must earn by closer cultivation of the soil, not for improvement of their own conditions, but to swell the revenues of an alien landlord on pain of being evicted from the wretched hovels that sheltered them.

I could not hope to afford even a faint idea of the squalor, the undescribable misery, produced by this system of refined barbarity. But picture to yourselves, if you can, a family of perhaps 10 or 12 persons living in a rude hut made of sods, supported by a pole placed one over the other; no floor but the bare ground; the only fuel available, turf cut from the neighboring bog—the dense smoke escaping

through a hole in the roof, or rather, I should say, through the top, for it would be a libel on architecture to speak of a roof in connection with hovels so miserable that nowadays a dog would not be suffered to exist in them. Yet that population survived these awful conditions; and how? Because they were never without hope in their bosoms. Hope of what? Hope that one day some, if not all of them, might reach this land across the sea where they knew everyone willing to work could count on being able by the labor of his hands to place sufficient bread in his mouth for his own support. Not all of them reached this country. Those of them who came here prospered, and I believed they earned the prosperity they secured by effective labor in the field of industry during peace and by gallant service in the field of battle during war. But even those who were left behind could still discern the light beyond the sea. By it hope was kept alive in their bosoms. And under the influence of that hope a race has been preserved from extinction which, thank Heaven, is now rising from the appalling degradation into which tyranny forced it, and preparing to take an honorable and useful place among the forces of civilization. That light of hope which streamed from this country and its open door into Ireland and into Poland is still diffusing itself wherever men and women are now plunged in conditions of misery. I repeat, Mr. Chairman, that however beneficent the effect of this policy has been to aliens in the past, whatever promise it may hold out to them for the future, we would not be justified in maintaining it if its maintenance could result in injury to ourselves. But it is a glorious fact that the policy which this country has maintained through all its existence—the one policy, I repeat, which can be called distinctively American—has been not alone the source of enormous benefit to ourselves, but it has been a light of hope to the whole human family, saving many of its branches from the ruin which without it would have been inevitable.

And here, Mr. Chairman, let me make just one more suggestion. It might be said that men and women who for generations have languished in conditions such as I have described must by that fact have become so demoralized industrially and physically as to be undesirable accessions to our population. And as they are all ignorant, the literacy test, it might be argued, is likely to prove an effective means of excluding them. Mr. Chairman, again the question occurs: What is it that constitutes a desirable immigrant? Is it the capacity to read, or the capacity to work? Is the evidence of desirability a calloused hand which shows familiarity with labor, or a fluent tongue, even if it shows some familiarity with letters? These men and women who have lived in the conditions which I have described have all been compelled to work, not merely hard, but desperately, to support their existence. Every one of them will show by his hands and muscles that he is qualified to work by long familiarity with it. He can not live except by industry. He has not sufficient instruction to make him a dangerous character. The really dangerous man is the one who could meet the literacy test triumphantly—the one who could read and write, but who perverts his abilities to formulating dangerous or vicious tendencies among other men. The illiterate man who works may on pay day get into trouble with the policeman through exuberance of spirits, caused by

the quality of spirits he has imbibed. He may be troublesome, but he is not dangerous. The fine which he pays has been produced by his labor. The dangerous man is the one who can plan forgery or burglary or other serious offense against our law. And that man can pass any literacy test that you can impose.

There is another class of immigrants, men who after a period of labor here return to their native countries with some money which they have been able to save, and these are mentioned as though they were peculiarly undesirable. I must confess that I am unable to see how such men could injure us. Nay, I can not see how they can fail to serve us. For the man who leaves this country, whether he goes empty-handed or with savings, I have nothing but sympathy. If he goes voluntarily he does not know what is good for him. If he goes through the pressure of necessity, I am sorry for him. And in the main it is only the pressure of necessity, or at least the pressure of strong family ties that suffices to make a man who has tasted life in this country voluntarily resume life in any other. But here again I can not see how this country has suffered any loss from a man who, after working here for a time returns to his native land with so much of his earnings as he has been able to save. He can not take away anything that he has not produced himself by his own labor, and he can not take away all that he has produced. No worker consumes all that he produces. No laborer obtains for himself the whole value of his product. If he did, there would be no profit in employing him.

The man who made these chairs or tables did not get their full value in wages. He got only a part; the employer got the remainder as profit on his capital. What is true of the laborer who made these chairs and tables is true of everybody engaged in production. Out of the amount received for wages every man must purchase the means of living while he works. The utmost that a returning immigrant can take away with him, therefore, is but a portion of what he has himself produced—and the smaller part of it. The balance remains here and must remain here to swell the volume of capital available to produce additional commodities for you and for me.

Here, then, we see that even the immigrant departing from these shores with some money that he has saved has benefited us even more than he has benefited himself. But apart from the money which he may take with him the returning immigrant has worked an enormous and most wholesome change throughout Europe. Years ago I was well acquainted with the Marquis de Rudini, who was then prime minister of Italy and, I think, one of the most intelligent statesmen who ever administered its Government. We were in the habit of talking a great deal about colonization. It was in the days directly after the Spanish War, when, as you may remember, the eyes of the world were fastened upon a certain imperialistic experiment which this country had just undertaken in the East, which both the chairman and I opposed at the time, and which one of us at least still deeply deplores. In the course of our conversation Signor Rudini said to me, "Italy has profited enormously by colonization." This surprised me, for his avowed policy was to reverse that of his predecessor, who had attempted to extend Italian authority over Abyssinia. When I expressed my surprise, however, he added, "The colonies which have enormously benefited Italy are two, and they are two she does not own, the United States and South America. Num-

bers of Italians cross the Atlantic every year. Some settle and raise families in the United States and South America. These of course are lost to us. They are no longer among the forces on whom we can count to enrich us by labor in times of peace and defend us by arms in times of war. But there are many who after working a while beyond the seas return here—some of them with considerable savings. The money they bring is valuable of course. But it is by no means their most valuable contribution.

“What is of incalculable value to us is a new conception of industry which they acquire while abroad and which they spread among their neighbors when they return. The Italian did not need to immigrate in order to become industrious. He always has been a willing worker. But his work was often inefficient for lack of efficient direction. The man who comes back from America brings with him a new sense of economizing his own energy and new capacity to direct the energies of others. Every village to which men have returned from South America or the United States shows in a very short time a radical change in its industrial aspect. “I am myself,” said he, “a Sicilian. It is amazing to see the change that has come over that part of the country in the last 20 years. Not merely are industrial conditions better everywhere, but sanitary conditions have been improved in every city, and if this stream of returning immigrants should continue, our whole life, national and industrial, will be recreated and on a much higher plane.”

This is the highest tribute ever paid to our country, so far as I know; and it proceeded from a statesman remarkable for wide vision as for incorruptible integrity.

I have mentioned all this in the hope that it may aid you to realize the civilizing influence which has been exercised throughout the world by the open door—the distinctive American policy. Not merely has it admitted millions to infinitely better conditions in this country than they ever knew before, but it has sent a quickening stream of improvement into other countries and communities far beyond the seas. Yet even all this does not exhaust the contribution to the civilization and progress of the world which this country has made by maintaining this policy based on the belief that no man can come here and work to improve his own condition without at the same time serving us in even larger measure. Vastly greater than all this is its solution of one problem which since the dawn of civilization has always confronted mankind with the impossibility of avoiding armed conflicts between different nations. The whole human family—at least the enterprising and progressive part of it—is always in a state of flux. Movement is the law of its being. There is inherent in every man equipped with a pair of hands a disposition to seek the field where they can be employed with the greatest productive efficiency. All the movements of races—the record of which constitutes what we call history—were in obedience to this inexorable law. The Roman Empire fell not before cruel men seeking to gratify thirst of blood in the destruction of human lives and thirst for violence in the destruction of property. It fell before hungry men seeking better pasturage for their flocks and their herds. The advances were resisted and they fought for better opportunity to exercise their industrial energies,

Until this country opened its doors to all white men it was believed that this irresistible tendency of men to seek better, more promising fields of labor rendered permanent peace impossible on this earth. But we have solved this difficulty. We have proved that the most extensive movement of races ever known does not necessarily cause destructive conflicts, but it may actually promote closer and therefore more effective cooperation in industry. More Gauls and Goths, Visi-Goths, and Austro-Goths, Huns and Vandals, Franks and Lombards have actually entered this country than ever swept over the Roman Empire in destructive fury. But instead of meeting them at the frontier with arms to resist their entry we have met them at an open door, offering them implements of industry. Instead of fighting to keep them out we invited them in to work for us, with the result that this wonderful country with all its wealth and population, its teeming cities, and its cultivated fields, its ever-growing abundance sprang into existence not in spite of immigration but through immigration.

The CHAIRMAN. Your time is up.

Mr. COCHRAN. I am very thankful for the opportunity to speak to you. If any gentleman would like to ask me questions, I am entirely at his disposal.

This gentleman asks me what the educational facilities in Ireland are to-day. They are very good. The entire conditions of the people are improving. They have improved greatly in the past 10 years.

The CHAIRMAN. In spite of all these conditions, they usually learn to read.

Mr. COCHRAN. Oh, no, sir. Instruction was prohibited in Ireland for many generations. Of the Irish immigrants who came here in the forties and fifties and sixties, and even in the early seventies, I do not think one person out of 10 could read or write.

The CHAIRMAN. I do not mean then; I mean the 10 years you spoke of.

Mr. COCHRAN. There has been practically no Irish immigration—none of any moment—during the last 10 years. Ireland furnished the largest numbers of immigrants during the forties and fifties and sixties, and I think, the seventies. But for the last few years I think the Irish have been only fourth or fifth.

Mr. SABATH. Was there not the same kind of opposition in the forties and fifties and sixties to the Irish immigrant who could not read that you find to-day with respect to the opposition with regard to this bill?

Mr. COCHRAN. Yes, and up to the eighties.

Mr. SABATH. The same kind of opposition that we are having to-day against present-day immigration?

Mr. COCHRAN. Absolutely. Indeed the opposition went so far that it broke out in riots. Churches were burned in Massachusetts and New York.

Mr. JOHNSON. You would have no objection to a few million Mexicans coming into the United States, would you?

Mr. COCHRAN. White Mexicans, not the slightest. I would have objections to the others for the reasons—

Mr. JOHNSON. The Indians—the mixture.

Mr. COCKRAN. Yes. Permit me also to suggest that your question is entirely fanciful. It is like asking if I would have any objection to taking Mexico physically and putting it down on the top of Arizona of California. Obviously, it could not be done, and therefore my opinion of its desirability would be entirely valueless. Neither could several million Mexicans come here. They are not there to come. Moreover, it would be wholly impossible for the entire population of any country, or even for any large part of it, to leave there and go elsewhere at one time. Only the unattached, the enterprising, the roving, can become immigrants. The rest are fastened to the soil by various ties; ownership of land, which can not be easily sold; by conditions of their families, and other causes. But if it were possible for all of them to come in here to work they would make opportunities for more work——

Mr. JOHNSON. They would make more opportunities for more work?

Mr. COCKRAN. Yes. They would create new demands for labor. They could not themselves work without creating opportunities for others to work.

Mr. JOHNSON. If they came over here and offered their services for much less than the native born American would work for, that you think would be better for all of us? -

Mr. COCKRAN. No; on the contrary, that is another proposition which I think is based on false economics. I have endeavored several times in the House, when we were discussing the tariff question, to point out that abundance of production must necessarily produce two results: One, an increase of wages, and the other an increase in the purchasing power of every dollar constituting such wages. That being the case, I favor every possible accession to the number of men working, since they can not work for themselves without at the same time working for you and working for me.

